



ODI RESUME

INVESTIGATION: EA00-023 **DATE CLOSED:** 12/10/01
SUBJECT: Tire Tread Separation/Tire Failure **DATE OPENED:** 31-AUG-00
PROMPTED BY: PE00-020, IE 00-024, Consumer complaints

PRINCIPAL ENGINEERS: Droneburg, Quandt, Magno
MANUFACTURER: Bridgestone/Firestone, Inc. (Firestone)
TIRE MODELS: See Attachment I
TIRE PRODUCTION YEARS: 1991-2001 **TIRE POPULATION:** Approximately 53 million

PROBLEM DESCRIPTION: Originally, all tire failures including, but not limited to, tread separation, blowouts and catastrophic air loss were examined. As the EA progressed, the failure mode was limited to tread (belt leaving belt) separation.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	TIRE MFR	TOTAL
COMPLAINTS/CLAIMS:	5193 (all tire sizes and failure modes included)	2742 ^{A,B}	7935 ^C
CRASHES:	over 500 ^A	260 ^A	over 760 ^{A,C}
INJURIES:	over 270 ^A	367 ^A	over 637 ^{A,C}
FATALITIES:	151 ^D	120 ^{D,E}	271 ^{D,E}

^A These counts include only complaints and claims related to incidents allegedly caused by tire tread separation.

Other tire failure modes have been excluded.

^B Includes Firestone Property Damage Claims, Personal Injury Claims, and Lawsuits.

^C Duplicates exist.

^D These counts include all tire failure modes.

^E These counts include data from all sources: Firestone, Ford, State Farm, Safety Forum, and FARS.

ACTION: This investigation is closed. Firestone has conducted two recalls (OOT-005 and OOT-016)

ENGINEER: [Signature] **DIV CHF:** [Signature] **OFC DIR:** [Signature]
12/06/01 12/06/01 12-10-01
 DATE DATE DATE

SUMMARY: On August 9, 2000, during the Preliminary Evaluation phase of the investigation, Firestone announced a safety recall (OOT-005) of all Radial ATX and ATXI tires, size P235/75R15, produced in North America and Wilderness AT tires in the P235/75R15 size produced at the Decatur plant. Approximately 14.5 million of these tires were produced. At that time, Firestone estimated that 6.5 million tires were still on the road. On October 4, 2001, the Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance issued an Initial Decision that a safety-related defect exists in Wilderness AT tires, sizes P235/75R15 and P255/70R16, built prior to the end of April 1998 and installed on sport utility vehicles (SUVs). This cut-off date was based on a modification incorporated at that time by Firestone to the wedge of the recalled tires. A copy of the NHTSA Press Release and Initial Decision Report is attached. The Initial Decision Report provides the technical basis for NHTSA's Initial Decision. On October 4, 2001, Firestone agreed to recall all of the tires (approximately 3.2 million original production) covered by the Initial Decision.

Although the agency has concerns about the possibility of future tread separation in tires similar to the recalled tires that were manufactured after the April 1998 wedge change, the available evidence at this time does not clearly demonstrate that a safety-related defect exists in those tires. NHTSA will continue to closely monitor the performance of these tires and reserves the right to take further action if warranted by future circumstances.